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GENERAL NOTES.

The Orbit of Σ 2026 = β 's G. C. No. 7561.—In the *Astronomische Nachrichten*, No. 4823, Professor WIRTZ publishes an orbit of this binary star which was found among the papers left by Dr. MARTIN MATZDORFF, who was killed at Ypres on November 2, 1914. The elements are:—

MATZDORFF	AITKEN
T = 1907.64	1909.25
$\omega = 162^{\circ}.23$	$203^{\circ}.0$
$\Omega = 10.18$	2.4
i = 45.73	50.45
a = $1''.779$	$1''.56$
e = 0.7222	0.66
P = $242^{\circ}.10$	163.3

My own elements, given in Volume XII of the *Lick Observatory Publications*, are printed for comparison with MATZDORFF'S. Tho there is a marked difference, especially between the two periods, the two orbits represent the observations to 1912, inclusive, equally well. MATZDORFF'S elements, however, gave the smaller residuals for my measures in 1914 and for WIRTZ'S in 1915, as the following figures show:—

				O—C.			
	θ_0	ρ_0	Obs.	MATZDORFF.		AITKEN.	
1914.44	105.6	$0''.51$	A	+ 4°.0	+ $0''.03$	+ 6°.6	+ $0''.08$
1915.53	91.3	0.54	W	— 0.4	+ 0.02	+ 6.6	+ 0.07

Both orbits are necessarily uncertain because the observations do not clearly define the apastron end of the apparent ellipse.
R. G. A.

Variable Nebula N. G. C. 6729.—H. KNOX SHAW publishes an interesting note in Bulletin No. 16 of the Helwan Observatory in which he states that photographs taken in the years 1911-1915 have definitely confirmed the belief of earlier observers that this nebula is variable. It is attached to the irregularly variable star R *Coronæ Australis*, and the new photographs establish "that the variation of the nebula is intimately connected with that of the star." Further study is in progress.

The Monthly Evening Sky Map.—With the December, 1915, number, the *Monthly Evening Sky Map*, completed the tenth year of its publication, and in the January, 1916, number, its founder and publisher, Mr. LEON BARRITT, gives an interesting account of its establishment and growth. In the course of his article he remarks upon the general lack of knowledge of even the simplest astronomical facts, and attributes this to the neglect of astronomy in our schools. "I have found," he says, "that astronomy is not taught in a single grammar school in the United States. A few high schools give it consideration in connection with physical geography, and in the colleges and universities it is elective, and very few take it up." As 75 per cent of the children in this country leave school when they graduate from the grammar school, the prevailing ignorance of astronomy is readily intelligible.

Mr. BARRITT is doing useful work in publishing the *Monthly Evening Sky Map*, which gives the data, with maps, to enable anyone to trace the constellations visible in the evening sky and to identify and follow the motions of the planets, and it is a pleasure to recommend the little journal to every one who is interested in astronomy.¹

In this connection attention is called to the fact that Miss MARY E. BYRD is organizing a section of the Society for Practical Astronomy, to be devoted to the practical teaching of astronomy. This and every other effort made to awaken and develop an interest in our science should receive our heartiest support.

Two New Observatories.—*Popular Astronomy* reports that Mr. JOHN H. DARLING of Duluth, Minnesota, has promised to build an observatory on one of the public play-grounds of that city. The building is to be of brick, with a 20-foot dome and an adjoining library and the telescope, a 9-inch refractor.

Sirius, for November, 1915, has a note on the establishment of a private observatory in Córdoba, Argentina, by Senor FEDERICO SCHNEIDER. The principal instrument is a refractor of 15^{cm} (6 inches) aperture, which is to be used chiefly in the observation of variable stars.

¹ The annual subscription price is \$1.00. Address, LEON BARRITT, 150 Nassau St., New York, N. Y.

New Zealand Ensign.—The *New Zealand Nautical Almanac and Tide Tables* contains the following item, which may be of general interest:—

“The New Zealand ensign shall be the blue ensign of the Royal Naval Reserve, having on the fly thereof the Southern Cross as represented by four five-pointed red stars with white borders. . . .

“The following is a description of the stars referred to, and their positions on the flag:—

“The centres of the stars forming the long limb of the cross shall be on a vertical line on the fly, midway between the Union Jack and the outer edge of the fly, and equidistant from its upper and lower edges; and the distance apart of the centres of the stars shall be equal to thirty-six sixtieths of the hoist of the ensign.

“The centres of the stars forming the short limb of the cross shall be on a line intersecting the vertical limb at an angle of 82° therewith, and rising from near the lower fly corner of the Union Jack towards the upper fly corner of the ensign, its point of intersection with the vertical line being distant from the centre of the uppermost star of the cross twelve-sixtieths of the hoist of the ensign. The distance of the centre of the star nearest the outer edge of the fly from the point of intersection shall be equal to twelve-sixtieths of the hoist of the ensign, and the distance of the centre of the star nearest the Union Jack from the point of intersection shall be equal to fourteen-sixtieths of the hoist of the ensign.

“The star nearest the fly edge of the ensign (δ , 3.1 mag.)¹ shall measure five-sixtieths, the star at the top of the cross (γ , 1.6 mag.) and that nearest to the Union Jack (β , 1.5 mag.) shall each measure six-sixtieths, and the star at the bottom of the cross (α = 1.1 mag.) shall measure seven-sixtieths of the hoist of the ensign across their respective red points, and the width of the white borders to the several stars shall in all cases be equal to one one-hundred-and-twentieth of the hoist of the ensign.”

CARL AXEL ROBERT LUNDIN died at his home in Cambridge, Mass., on November 28, 1915. Mr. LUNDIN was connected with the ALVAN CLARK & SONS for many years, and had a share in the construction of the lenses for the 36-inch Lick refractor and the 40-inch Yerkes refractor. Later he became the head of the firm, which has continued the work of figuring both lenses and mirrors for use in large and small telescopes.

¹ The Greek letters and magnitudes are not given in the official description of the ensign.

Branch Hydrographic Office, San Francisco, January 4th.—
Captain J. H. TRASK of the steamer Sonoma reports to this office that on December 2, 1915, in latitude south $22^{\circ} 08'$, longitude east $177^{\circ} 47'$, passed thru large quantities of pumice dust and stones. The whole mass had a dirty green color and extended for several miles around the ship.

CHARLES P. HUFF,
Lieut.-Com. U. S. N., in charge.
(*S. F. Chronicle*, Jan. 5, 1916.)

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE
ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY OF THE PACIFIC, HELD IN
THE ROOMS OF THE SOCIETY ON JANUARY
29, 1916, AT 7:30 P. M.

There were present: President R. G. AITKEN and Directors TOWNLEY, CUSHING, COSTA, MARKWART, CORNISH, LEUSCHNER and RICHARDSON.

Communication was read from Prof. W. J. HUSSEY, Director of the Detroit Observatory, asking that he be made a Life Member. He was elected by unanimous vote.

Mr. HARLOW SHAPLEY was elected as an Active Member of the Society.

The matter of increasing the membership of the Society and reducing the dues was introduced by President AITKEN and discussed by the Board.

On motion of TOWNLEY, seconded by CUSHING, President AITKEN was appointed a committee of one, with authority to add such other members as he may think fit, and instructed to submit recommendations at the next meeting of the Board.

Attention of the Board was called to the fact that little use is made of the library of the Society—and opinions invited as to the policy of turning the books on hand over to one of the large popular libraries of the city of San Francisco.

The Library Committee was instructed to investigate the matter and report at next meeting.

Adjourned.

D. S. RICHARDSON, *Secretary.*

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ASTRONOMICAL
SOCIETY OF THE PACIFIC, HELD IN THE ASSEMBLY
HALL OF THE PHELAN BUILDING, SAN FRANCISCO,
ON JANUARY 29, 1916, AT 8:00 O'CLOCK P. M.

President R. G. AITKEN in the chair.

On motion of Director LEUSCHNER the minutes of the last annual meeting were approved as printed.